General Assembly

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Fifty-seventh session
Agenda item 10

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/57/L.79)*]

57/337. Prevention of armed conflict

The General Assembly,

Guided by the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling Chapter VI and Article 2.3 of the Charter of the United Nations,

Recalling also the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples as contained in its resolution 1514 (XV) of 14 December 1960,

Recognizing that multilateral cooperation under United Nations auspices could be an effective means to prevent armed conflict and to address its root causes,

Reaffirming its commitment to the principles of the political independence, the sovereign equality and the territorial integrity of all States,

Guided by the Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Cooperation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, annexed to its resolution 2625 (XXV) of 24 October 1970,

Having considered the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict,[1]

Bearing in mind its responsibilities, functions and powers under the Charter of the United Nations, and thus recalling all its relevant resolutions in matters related to the question of the prevention of armed conflict,

Recalling all Security Council resolutions relating to the prevention of armed conflict, and noting all Security Council presidential statements related to this matter,

Recognizing that the prevention of armed conflict and the pacific settlement of disputes could be useful tools for the United Nations in order to build a solid foundation for peace,

[1] A/55/985-S/2001/574 and Corr.1.

Alarmed by the human costs and devastating humanitarian, economic, environmental, political and social consequences of armed conflict, and recognizing the imperatives, including moral, of the prevention of armed conflict and its benefits for peace and development, in particular by addressing the root causes of armed conflict,

Recognizing that peace and development are mutually reinforcing, including in the prevention of armed conflict,

Recognizing also the importance of humanitarian assistance in ensuring an effective transition from conflict to peace and in preventing the recurrence of armed conflict,

Affirming that the fulfilment of the obligation to respect and ensure respect in all circumstances for the provisions of international humanitarian law, particularly the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949,[2] will enhance the prospects for the peaceful resolution of armed conflict and for the prevention of its occurrence and recurrence,

Affirming also that full respect for all human rights and fundamental freedoms for all is one of the key elements for the prevention of armed conflict,

Recognizing that the root causes of armed conflict are multidimensional in nature, thus requiring a comprehensive and integrated approach to the prevention of armed conflict,

Determined to establish a just and lasting peace all over the world in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, and upholding the sovereign equality of all States, respect for their territorial integrity and political independence, resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, the right of self-determination of peoples which remain under colonial domination and foreign occupation, non-interference in the internal affairs of States, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms, respect for the equal rights of all without distinction as to race, sex, language or religion, and international cooperation in solving international problems of an economic, social, cultural or humanitarian character,

Welcoming the adoption of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations,[3] and recognizing the continued inter-religious dialogues and the promotion of religious harmony as contributions to the prevention of armed conflict,

Affirming that the ethnic, cultural and religious identity of minorities, where they exist, must be protected, and that persons belonging to such minorities should be treated equally and enjoy their human rights and fundamental freedoms without discrimination of any kind,

Resolving to take appropriate measures, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, combined with the efforts of Member States, to prevent armed conflicts,

1. *Takes note with appreciation* of the report of the Secretary-General on the prevention of armed conflict;[1]

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[2] United Nations, *Treaty Series*, vol. 75, No. 973.

[3] See resolution 56/6.

2. *Emphasizes* the importance of a comprehensive and coherent strategy comprising short-term operational and long-term structural measures for the prevention of armed conflict, and recognizes the ten principles outlined in the report of the Secretary-General;

3. *Reaffirms* the primary responsibility of Member States for the prevention of armed conflict, recalls the important role of the United Nations in this regard, and invites Member States, where appropriate, to adopt national strategies, taking into account, inter alia, those ten principles, as well as such elements as multilateral and regional cooperation, mutual benefit, sovereign equality, transparency and confidence-building measures;

4. *Encourages* Member States to utilize regional arrangements or agencies, where available, for the peaceful settlement of their disputes;

5. *Reiterates its call upon* the Member States to settle their disputes by peaceful means as set forth in Chapter VI of the Charter of the United Nations, including by the most effective use of the International Court of Justice;

6. *Resolves* that all Member States strictly adhere to their obligations as laid down in the Charter of the United Nations;

7. *Calls upon* the parties to any dispute, the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security, to seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice in accordance with Article 33 of the Charter of the United Nations;

8. *Reaffirms* the primary responsibility of the Security Council for the maintenance of international peace and security, especially should the parties to such a dispute fail to settle it by the means indicated in paragraph 7 above in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, and also notes in this regard the Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes;[4]

9. *Emphasizes* that the prevention of armed conflict would be promoted by continued cooperation among Member States, the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and regional and subregional organizations, noting that the private sector and civil society have supporting roles to play;

10. *Reaffirms*, in the context of the prevention of armed conflict, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and of acts of colonization, and affirms the need to bring an end to situations of foreign occupation, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations and international law;

11. *Recognizes* the need for mainstreaming and coordinating the prevention of armed conflict throughout the United Nations system, and calls upon all its relevant organs, organizations and bodies to consider, in accordance with their respective mandates, how they could best include a conflict prevention perspective in their activities, where appropriate, and to inform the General Assembly, pursuant to resolution 55/281 of 1 August 2001, no later than at its fifty-ninth session, of progress achieved in this regard;

[4] Resolution 37/10, annex.

12. *Calls upon* Member States and the international community to abide by the resolve of the Millennium Assembly to make the United Nations more effective in maintaining peace and security by giving it the resources and tools it needs for conflict prevention;[5]

13. *Calls* for strengthening the capacity of the United Nations in order to carry out more effectively its responsibilities for the prevention of armed conflict, including relevant peace-building and development activities, and requests the Secretary-General to submit a detailed review of the capacity of the United Nations system in the context of the report on the implementation of the present resolution;

14. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit a comprehensive report on the implementation of the present resolution, taking into account, inter alia, the views expressed by Member States and the organs, agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system in accordance with resolution 55/281, for consideration no later than at its fifty-ninth session;

15. *Decides* to adopt the conclusions and recommendations, based on its consideration of the report of the Secretary-General, as contained in the annex to the present resolution;

16. *Decides also* to include in the provisional agenda of its fifty-ninth session a specific item entitled "Prevention of armed conflict".

93rd plenary meeting
3 July 2003

Annex

General Assembly conclusions and recommendations on the prevention of armed conflict

The General Assembly

Role of Member States

1. *Calls upon* Member States to achieve the goals embodied in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[6] including the internationally agreed development goals, as well as the outcomes of the major United Nations conferences and summits;

2. *Calls in this regard upon* Member States and the international community at large to support poverty eradication measures and the development strategies of developing countries;

3. *Urges* developed countries that have not done so to make concrete efforts towards the target of providing 0.7 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of their gross national product as official development assistance to least developed countries, as reconfirmed at the Third United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries,[7] and encourages developing countries to build on progress

[5] See resolution 55/2, para. 9.

[6] See resolution 55/2.

[7] See A/CONF.191/11.

achieved in ensuring that official development assistance is used effectively to help to achieve development goals and targets;

4. *Encourages* greater transparency in armaments by Member States, as appropriate, including broader and more active participation in the United Nations instruments relating to arms registers and military expenditures, and calls upon them strongly to support confidence-building measures in this area;

5. *Calls upon* Member States to implement the obligations assumed by them as States parties to treaties in such areas as arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament and to strengthen their international verification instruments;

6. *Reaffirms* the resolve of the international community to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction;

7. *Invites* Member States that have not already done so to consider, as appropriate, becoming parties to arms control, non-proliferation and disarmament treaties;

8. *Urges* Member States, as well as relevant United Nations bodies, to take appropriate measures to fully implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects;[8]

9. *Urges* Member States which have not already done so to consider ratification, acceptance, approval of or accession to the international human rights and international humanitarian law instruments, and also other international instruments relevant to the prevention of armed conflict;

10. *Calls upon* Member States to comply in good faith with the obligations assumed by them as States parties to international legal instruments relevant to the prevention of armed conflict;

11. *Notes* the entry into force on 1 July 2002 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court[9] and the subsequent establishment of the International Criminal Court;

12. *Stresses* the need to bring to justice the perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity as a significant contribution towards the promotion of a culture of prevention;

13. *Also stresses* the important role that women, in their various capacities, and with their expertise, training and knowledge, can play with regard to the prevention of armed conflict, in all its aspects, and calls for the strengthening of that role in all relevant institutions at the national, regional and international levels;

14. *Urges* Member States to make the most effective use of existing and new procedures and methods for the peaceful settlement of their disputes, including, as appropriate, arbitration, mediation and other treaty-based arrangements, and the International Court of Justice, to settle their disputes in a peaceful manner and thereby promote the role of international law in international relations;

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[8] See *Report of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, New York, 9–20 July 2001* (A/CONF.192/15), chap. IV, para. 24.

[9] *Official Records of the United Nations Diplomatic Conference of Plenipotentiaries on the Establishment of an International Criminal Court, Rome, 15 June–17 July 1998*, vol. I: *Final documents* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.02.I.5), sect. A.

15. *Emphasizes* the need, at all levels of society and among nations, for strengthening freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding as important elements for preventing armed conflict;

16. *Encourages* Member States to strengthen national capacities for addressing structural risk factors, as deemed useful by national Governments, with the support, as appropriate, of the international community, including the United Nations system, the Bretton Woods institutions and regional and subregional organizations;

Role of the General Assembly

17. *Expresses its determination* to make more effective use of its powers under Articles 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 17 of the Charter of the United Nations for the prevention of armed conflict;

18. *Intends* to make fuller use of Article 96 of the Charter of the United Nations;

19. *Decides* to consider ways of enhancing interaction with the other United Nations organs, especially the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council, and with the Secretary-General in terms of developing and implementing long- and short-term measures and strategies aimed at preventing armed conflict;

Role of the Security Council

20. *Takes note* of the provisions contained in Security Council resolution 1366 (2001) of 30 August 2001, in particular the commitment of the Council to take early and effective action to prevent armed conflict;

21. *Encourages* the Security Council to give prompt consideration to early warning or prevention cases brought to its attention by the Secretary-General, and to use appropriate mechanisms, such as the Ad Hoc Working Group on Conflict Prevention and Resolution in Africa, with due regard to relevant regional and subregional dimensions, in accordance with Article 99 of the Charter of the United Nations;

22. *Further encourages* the Security Council to keep under close review situations of potential armed conflict and to consider seriously cases of potential armed conflict brought to its attention by a State or the General Assembly or on the basis of information furnished by the Economic and Social Council;

23. *Recognizes* that the United Nations can continue to play an important role in the prevention of armed conflict by promoting conflict resolution and dispute settlement;

24. *Encourages* the continued strengthening of the process of the peaceful settlement of disputes and efforts to make it more effective;

25. *Notes* the commitment of the Security Council to make wider and effective use of the procedures and means enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, particularly in Chapter VI, as one of the essential components of its work to promote and maintain international peace and security;

26. *Reaffirms* that the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, for which the prevention of armed conflict is important, is conferred upon the Security Council, and reiterates that, under

Article 25 of the Charter of the United Nations, the Members of the United Nations have agreed to accept and carry out the decisions of the Security Council in accordance with the Charter;

27. *Recommends* that the Security Council continue to mandate peacekeeping operations and include, as appropriate, peace-building elements therein, in such a way as to generate conditions which, to the maximum extent possible, help to avoid the recurrence of armed conflict;

28. *Encourages* the Security Council to continue to invite the office of the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator and other relevant United Nations agencies to brief its members on emergency situations which it deems to represent a threat to international peace and security, and to support the implementation of protection and assistance activities by relevant United Nations agencies in accordance with their respective mandates;

29. *Notes* the willingness of the Security Council to consider, in the context of United Nations peacekeeping operations, preventive deployments with the consent and cooperation of the Member States concerned;

30. *Encourages* the Security Council to give, as appropriate, greater attention to gender perspectives in all its activities aimed at the prevention of armed conflict;

31. *Encourages* the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council to strengthen their mutual cooperation and coordination, in accordance with their respective mandates, for the prevention of armed conflict;

Role of the Economic and Social Council

32. *Supports* the more active involvement of the Economic and Social Council with regard to the prevention of armed conflict, taking into account the relevant recommendations of the Secretary-General and the need to promote socio-economic measures, including economic growth, in support of poverty eradication and development, as a core element of Council strategy in that regard;

33. *Welcomes* Economic and Social Council resolution 2002/1 of 15 July 2002, which envisages the creation of ad hoc advisory groups on African countries emerging from conflicts, as well as Council decision 2002/304 of 25 October 2002, by which the Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Guinea-Bissau was created, requests the Council to present a report on the lessons learned by the ad hoc advisory groups during its substantive session of 2004, and recommends that such endeavours be further strengthened, including through measures that promote more effective responses in cooperation and coordination with the United Nations system as a whole, the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization;

Role of the Secretary-General

34. *Welcomes* the intention of the Security Council to engage within the United Nations system in a focused dialogue on what practical measures the United Nations system needs to take to promote greater coherence in its activities aimed at the prevention of armed conflict, and recommends that consideration be given, inter alia, to identifying the proper framework for the elaboration of system-wide coherent and action-oriented strategies within the United Nation System, at Headquarters and in the field, and for rationalizing the funding procedures for the prevention of armed conflict;

35. *Recalls*, in that context, the need to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations for early warning, collection of information and analysis, as referred to in its resolution 47/120 A of 18 December 1992, and notes the relevant conclusions and recommendations endorsed in its resolution 56/225 of 24 December 2001;

36. *Supports* the intention of the Secretary-General to improve the use of means placed at his disposal and within his authority to facilitate the prevention of armed conflict, including through fact-finding missions and confidence-building measures;

Interaction between the United Nations and other international actors in the prevention of armed conflict: role of regional organizations and civil society

Regional organizations

37. *Calls* for the strengthening of cooperation, where appropriate, between the United Nations and regional organizations in the field of prevention of armed conflict, in accordance with their respective mandates, in particular in capacity-building and the coordination of their respective activities, and for that purpose requests the Secretary-General to present concrete proposals for enhancing Secretariat support of those activities within his comprehensive report;

38. *Encourages* the continuation of high-level United Nations/regional organizations meetings, including on the prevention of armed conflict, and requests the Secretary-General to keep the General Assembly informed accordingly;

Civil society

39. *Recognizes* the important supporting role of civil society in the prevention of armed conflict, and invites it to continue to support efforts for the prevention of armed conflict and to pursue practices that foster a climate of peace, help to prevent or mitigate crisis situations and contribute to reconciliation.